June 2009

Computer Skill among Librarians in Academic Libraries in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria

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Introduction

Globalization is a concept developed during the 1970s. The concept brings countries into a global economic and industrial market in which they can compete freely without economic or legal restrictions. Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of the concept, it has engulfed the whole world. Ogunmodede (2006) contends that for many countries and people, "globalization is a propelling dream, a momentous vision that must be realized in the new millennium vision or never … from all indications, it seems to be catching fire and its fire is already burning deep leaving some positive as well as overwhelming devastating effects in developing countries". This paper considers one of the most profound positive effects of globalization, and the challenges it poses to librarians, particularly in use of computers and the competence it requires.

This paper considers one of the most profound positive effects of globalization, and the implications and challenges posed to librarians and their profession in the use of computers and the competence it requires.

ICT has catapulted the world into an information-driven society that relies on ideas and information. The exponential growth in ICT has caused socio-cultural, political, educational, and economic change. ICT has engendered a new approach to work and service delivery, and is a technological devlopment that has come changed work and job expectations (Salisu 2002).

ICT has collapsed barriers and promoted fast communication and interactions across boundaries. Hence, the need for a sound mind with the ability to produce sound responses under pressure is essential to meet the daily responsibilities and challenges of life. The need to meet these basic challenges and responsibilities has also informed the invention and the use of information technologies.

Prominent among the several offshoots of information technologies is the computer. It is an all embracing mechanism. It is also an electronic device that is capable of accepting storing, retrieving and processing data based on predefined instructions (Owoyemi 2001).

Prominent among the several offshoots of information technologies is the computer. It is an all embracing mechanism that is capable of accepting storing, retrieving and processing data based on predefined instructions (Owoyemi 2001). Before the advent of computer technology at the close of the 20 th century, computers were rare in libraries. The basic functions of librarians were carried out manually. The computer is capable of quickly accomplishing a large volume of what can be done manually. The computer has become a basic tool for generating and processing information.

Nwachuku (2005) contends that using computers to make information accessible and consumable engages diverse skills needed by information professionals, especially librarians. He goes on to say that computer skills for academic librarians will mean the use of computers for giving service quickly and inexpensively. Computers have enhanced efficiency and librarians must acquire relevant computer skill and competence to make their profession and roles relevant in this information-driven age.

Literature Review

The advent of ICT and the ready availability of information have redefine librarians' roles and duties. Griffiths and King (1985) contend that three major factors have led to the information age: new technologies, social adaptation to information availability and use, and the emergence of a new information profession.

The appearance of ICT on the global scene has caused a revolution in libraries and all service providing industries. ICT has changed the ways and patterns in which information and other services are dispensed. Nwachukwu (2005) supports this by observing that with all the changes in information and the processes of access, storage, transmission, and reproduction, and librarians and libraries must adapt to new roles and skills to cope with change.

The only way of satisfying user demand is to use ICT in information service delivery. Librarians and libraries must do this to remain relevant in the face of challenges and changes. Sass (2001) contends that to ensure our relevance to a new generation of users, "we need to be where our users are, even if they are not inside our libraries."

Academic librarians must acquire relevant skills and competence in the application of the skills to the use of ICT. Obodoeze (2007) concludes that human resources development becomes fundamental. Shibanda (2001) holds that the information managers, especially academic librarians, must build on the positive aspects of information era while alleviating the negative aspects of globalization. Supporting that view, Edekor (2004) contends that the effective management of new technologies depends largely on the availability of skilled employees and the society's level of literacy. For librarians to move forward in relevance and for libraries to provide services to demanding users, they must acquire relevant skill and competence in the use of ICT. Garuba (2007) support this view when he holds that the changing role requires that librarians learn new ways of performing their duties. He adds that computer literacy is of paramount importance to library professionals not only in Nigeria but other developing countries.

Salisu (2002) observes that strategies to cope with the challenges of ICTs must start with an examination of education for librarianship. Advocacy for continuing professional education (CPE) becomes inevitable, especially in core competencies of ICT. The world is driven by ICTS, and information service providers should be prepared to catch up with the global trend, so that they will not be abandoned.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of skill acquisition and competence in the use of ICT is significant, particularly in the information age in which we find ourselves. Librarians must acquire competence to be relevant in their profession, in which nearly all roles and responsibilities are performed with the use of computers. There

2

are still librarians who are not computer literate, and who are deficient in the skills needed to operate a computer effectively. Librarians in many libraries in Nigeria still carry out library routines and functions manually, and the few computers in most libraries are used for administrative duties by confidential secretaries. This paper explores computer skill and competence among librarians in Ondo and Ekiti States and the level of ICT implementation in libraries in the two states.

Methodology

This study uses a questionnaire and oral interviews. The focus of the study was to whether academic librarians in Ondo and Ekiti states possess computer skills and competencies in the use of computer. The libraries selected for the study in the two states were Federal University of Technology (FUTA) Akure, Adekunle Ajasin University (AAUA) Akungba-Akoko, University of Ado-Ekiti (UNAD) Ado-Ekiti, Federal Polytechnic (FPA) Ado-Ekiti, Rufus Giwa polytechnic (RUGIPO), Owo and Adeyemi college of Education, (ACE), Ondo. Thirty questionnaires were administered to respondents in the libraries under study. The population consisted of academic librarians, and a sampling technique was used to distribute questionnaires in each library. Twenty-four questionnaires were returned, representing an 80 percent return rate. Among the twenty-four respondents, 8 were female and 16 male. The data were analyzed with frequency count and simple percentages.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used:

- Are there computer facilities in academic libraries in Ondo and Ekiti states ?
- Are these computers functioning?
- What are these computers used for in the libraries?
- Are the librarians computer literate enough to use these computers?
- How did these librarians acquire computer skills?
- What programs or packages can these librarians use to demonstrate their skills?

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

Institutions	Frequency	Percent
Federal University of technology (FUTA)	7	29.2
Adekunle Ajasin University (AAUA)	3	12.5
University of Ado-Ekiti (UNAD)	3	12.5
Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti (FPA)	4	16.7
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, (RUGIPO)	3	12.5
Adeyemi College of Education, (ACE)	4	16.7
Total	24	100

Table 1 reveals that the number of professional librarians in academic libraries in the two states is inadequate. The effect of this could be very devastating particularly to service delivery.

Table 2: Computer availability

Respondents	Circulation			Reference			Cataloguing			Serials			Acquisitions		
	EXP	ACT	Percent	EXP	ACT	Percent	EXP	ACT	Percent	EXP	ACT	Percent	EXP	ACT	Percent
FUTA	3	2	67	2	1	50	4	2	50	2	1	50	1	1	100
AAUA	3	1	34	2	-	0	4	3	75	2	-	0	1	-	0
UNAD	3	-	0	2	-	0	4	1	25	2	-	0	1	-	0
FPA	2	1	50	1	-	0	3	-	0	1	-	0	1	-	0
RUGIPO	2	-	0	1	-	0	3	-	0	1	-	0	1	-	0
ACE	2	-	0	1	-	0	3	-	0	1	-	0	1	-	0

EXP – Expected number of computers

ACT – Actual number of computers

Table 2 shows the expected number of computers in each unit of the library and the actual number of computers found.

The table reveals that only FUTA has the number of computers expected. AAUA, UNAD, FPA RUGIPO, and ACE have no computers in Serial and Acquisitions, while RUGIPO and ACE have no computers in any of the unit of their libraries.

Table 3: Distribution showing functionality of computers in the libraries selected for the study

Computer	Frequency	Percent
Functioning	22	91.7
Not functioning	-	-
No Response	2	8.3
Total	24	100

Table 3 shows that nearly all the computers that are installed in the libraries surveyed are functioning.

Table 4: Functions perform by librarians with computers

Functions	Frequency (*)	Percent
Library routine	4	13.3
Administrative	12	40
Internet browsing	14	46.7
Others	-	-
Total	30	100

* Frequency = 30 due to multiple choice answers

Table 4 shows that 40 to 50 percent of the computers are used for administrative functions and Internet access, while a much smaller number are used for routine library functions.

Table 5: Computer literacy

Items	Frequency	Percent
Literate	21	87.5
Not literate	3	12.5
No Response	-	-
Total	24	100

Table 5 shows computer literacy in nearly 90 percent of respondents.

Table 6: Source of knowledge or training

Item	Frequency	Percent
Formal training	8	33.3
Workshop	9	37.5
Conferences		
Friends	5	20.8
No Training	2	8.3
Total	24	100

Table 6 reveals that one third of respondents obtained skills through formal training. A slighely larger number learned through workshops, while one fifth learned from friends.

Table 7: Familiarity with software

Program	Frequency (*)	Percentages (%)
Word	24	44.4
Excel	13	25.9
PowerPoint	5	9.3
Corel Draw	4	7.4
Adobe PageMaker	7	12.9
Other	-	_
Total	54	100

* Frequency = 54 due to multiple choice answers

Nearly half the respondents use Microsoft Word, with smaller numbers using other Microsoft products and other software such as Adobe and Corel products.

Findings

The study focused on the computer skill of librarians in academic libraries in Ondo and Ekiti States. The use of computers has become a global phenomenon and there are plans in the libraries selected for study to computerize their operations. The study found that the number of professional librarians in the libraries selected is small. FUTA has seven (29.2 percent) professional staff, the highest among this group of libraries.

5

The number of computers installed in these academic libraries is smaller than expected. Expected numbers use a baseline of Cataloguing, 4, Reference, 2, Circulation, 3, Serials, 2, and Acquisitions 1, based on the number of staff and nature of the function. Only FUTA meets this expected baseline. Few librarians use these computers to carry out library functions, which may suggest that their computer skill is impeded. Little skill is required to navigate or explore the Internet, which was the most common use reported. This skill may not necessarily increase their ability to perform other functions. Nearly all respondents reported themselves to be computer literate, but this outcome does not mean that the librarians possess the necessary computer skille. Literacy is merely a prerequisite for these skills.

Only one third of respondents have received formal computer training. It is through formal training that required skills could be taught; learners would be exposed to both the rudiments and intricacies of computer programs and packages. This low number receiving formal training suggests that very few librarians have the necessary computer skills. More than half the librarians population in the two states cannot use Microsoft Word. Very few can work on other programs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is obvious that academic libraries in Ondo and Ekiti states have very few computers and these computers are used more for administrative duties and Internet browsing than library routines. Most of the librarians are computer literate, but have no computers to use. The rate of computer skill and competence is low.

It is imperative that librarians in the two states be properly trained to acquire computer skills. The training becomes necessary as most libraries in the two states are making pre-computerization arrangements for the automation of their libraries

IFLA states that, "training is a vital element of the activities of any library. There must be a planned and continuous programme of training for staff at all levels, this should include both full time and part time staff. The rapid development in information technology make the need for regular of networking and access to other information sources should be included in training programs" Edekor (2004) concludes that effective management of new technologies depends largely on the availability of skilled employees and the society's level of literacy.

It is recommended that:

- More attention and funds should be committed to training and procurement of ICT infrastructure in Nigerian university libraries.
- Training should be aimed at the upcoming computerization of libraries
- Library administrators should seek funds from the many foreign agencies and foundations who give financial assistance and equipment to libraries.

Finally, a policy should be put in place by National Universities Commission mandating all universities to automate their libraries within a specific period of time. This policy will have a significant impact on librarians' acquisition of computer skills and competencies.

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6

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7

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